

**Statement**

S. No.	Circle	Total Gram Panchayats in Circle as on 28.2.97	Gram Panchayats Provided with VPTs as on 15.3.97
1.	Andaman Nicobar	67	53
2.	Andhra Pradesh	19533	17095
3.	Assam	2485	2080
4.	Bihar	11792	8907
5.	Gujarat	13510	12215
6.	Haryana	5946	5400
7.	Himachal Pradesh	2757	2460
8.	Jammu and Kashmir	1461	740
9.	Karnataka	5676	5340
10.	Kerala	982	982
11.	Madhya Pradesh	30922	19226
12.	Maharashtra	24937	22249
13.	North-East	4241	2206
14.	Orissa	5261	4973
15.	Punjab	11743	9252
16.	Rajasthan	9178	8208
17.	Tamil Nadu	13288	12994
18.	Uttar Pradesh (E)	61262	19054
19.	Uttar Pradesh (W)	16609	7998
20.	West Bengal	3295	3225
21.	Calcutta Tel	468	107
Total		245413	164844

[English]

**Regional Office of the Mineral Exploration Corporation Ltd.**

\*365. SHRI UDDHAB BARMAN : Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Regional Offices of the Mineral Exploration Corporation Limited are proposed to be wound up;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether any new guidelines have been chalked out to intensify the mineral exploration activities in the country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) and (b) In the interest of consolidating and improving the

financial position of the Mineral Exploration Corporation Limited (MECL) the Expert Committee set up by the Ministry of Mines has recommended the replacement of the present 3-Tier structure by a 2-Tier structure by abolishing Area Offices. Certain action was initiated towards implementation of these recommendations. However, on receipt of some representations, the recommendations are presently under review.

(c) and (d) As per the new Mineral Policy, 1993 announced by the Government of India, mining sector has been thrown open to private investors including foreign parties. Therefore, MECL, in order to operate in an open and competitive environment is required to improve its operations by adopting modern techniques of exploration. MECL is to expand its operations by securing more and more exploration jobs on contractual basis which will make the Company financially viable while its role on promotional exploration activities will be limited to the budgetary support from the Government.

**Serials**

\*366. SHRI SOUMYA RANJAN : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether most of the serials shown on Doordarshan are trivialising serious social issues;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the norms fixed for selection of serials on TV network;

(d) whether any irregularities have come to the notice of the Government regarding approval of serials;

(e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) whether the Government propose to set up a committee to select a slot and serials for Doordarshan;

(g) if so, the details of the composition of the said committee;

(h) whether the Government also propose to associate CBI officials in this regard; and

(i) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) No, Sir. It is Doordarshan's constant endeavour to approve programmes which propagate high social values combined with wholesome entertainment. In particular, preference is given to programmes which promote good socio-cultural values, among other things.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The broad criteria for selection of serials are as follows :

(i) Storyline and its contemporary relevance;